

22 March 1976

Honorable Edmund Muskie, Chairman
Committee on Budget
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Within the past few weeks, I have had several conversations with Senators Alan Cranston and Peter Domenici on the subject of information which the Budget Committee might feel it needs on the budget and related areas concerning the intelligence community.

In our most recent meeting, Senator Cranston requested the total budget figures of the intelligence community and its component agencies, e.g., CIA, DIA and NSA. He also expressed interest in some additional information relating to major functional categories within those total budget areas.

I said that I would look into the matter, but upon learning of Senator Cranston's desire to ultimately release at least the total budget figures to the public, I expressed grave reservations. My predecessors in this position have taken a similar view on this subject. Additionally, as you know, both Houses of Congress have considered this issue and have voted decisively against publishing intelligence budget figures. I did indicate, however, that I would consider Senator Cranston's request for access on a classified basis and would discuss the matter with the leadership of our oversight committees to elicit their guidance.

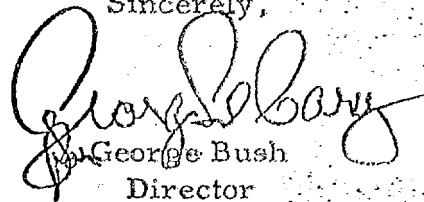
I have now consulted the leaders of our existing Senate oversight committees. They agree with me that a final decision on this matter be delayed until the Senate has acted on the overall question of oversight.



As you know, it is my intention to cooperate fully with those committees which the Congress determines should have oversight over intelligence matters. I would hope, however, that the Congress, in its wisdom, would limit access to sensitive intelligence information to the fewest committees and committee staff members possible.

I am, of course, always available to discuss this matter further with you and the Budget Committee, but feel I must take this position until the Senate has resolved the very issues that have been raised by Senator Cranston's request.

Sincerely,



George Bush
Director

cc: Senator Alan Cranston